

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY LIMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9852

INFO AMEMBASSY QUITO

C O N F I D E N T I A L LIMA 3789

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR EC PE EFIN

SUBJ: DE LA PUENTE'S LETTER TO SECRETARY ON ECUADOREAN ACCESS
TO AMAZON

REF: LIMA 3721

1. DE LA PUENTE'S LETTER STRIKES US AS BEING FORTHRIGHT AND TO THE POINT, DESPITE THE INITIAL CHIDING FOR NOT MENTIONING THE RIO PROTOCOL IN THE SECRETARY'S LETTER OF MARCH 27. IT CLEARLY PREDICATES CONTINUED DISCUSSIONS WITH FOREIGN MINISTER AYALA ON ECUADOR'S UNEQUIVOCABLE ACCEPTANCE OF THE RIO PROTOCOL. THIS APPLIES TO BOTH THE DEMARCATION OF THE UNDELIMITED PORTION OF THE BORDER AND TO REGIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION IN THE AMAZON REGION ORIENTED TOWARD FACILITATING ECUADOREAN TRADE. IF ECUADOR WERE TO REAFFIRM ITS ADHERENCE TO THE RIO PACT (AN EVENTUALITY THAT SEEMS UNLIKELY TO US IN THE NEAR TERM), PERU MIGHT BE WILLING TO CONSIDER A SMALL, SYMBOLIC CONCESSION IN THE DEMARCATION OF THE UNDEFINED PORTION OF THE BORDER, BUT WE DOUBT THAT THE GOP WOULD EVER CONSIDER A RADICAL REDRAWING OF THE FRONTIER TO GIVE ECUADOR EVEN THE NARROWEST OF CORRIDORS TO ANY POINT ON THE MARANON.

2. WE ASSUME FROM THE TENOR OF DE LA PUENTE'S LETTER THAT
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THE GOP IS UNWILLING TO RENEW THE UNPUBLICIZED "INFORMAL" NEGOTIATIONS WITH ECUADOR THAT PRECEDED THE FLAREUP EARLY THIS YEAR. WE SUSPECT THAT DE LA PUENTE MAY HAVE HAD HIS HAND SLAPPED BY HIS MILITARY COLLEAGUES FOR ENCOURAGING THE ECUADOREANS TO EXPECT TOO MUCH IN THESE TALKS. ALTHOUGH DE LA PUENTE'S REPLY DOES NOT RESPOND TO THE SECRETARY'S SUGGESTION THAT THE LEVEL OF PUBLIC DEBATE BE REDUCED,

PRIVATELY HE IS PROBABLY IN COMPLETE AGREEMENT. INFORMALLY PERUVIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS SUGGEST TO US THAT ECUADOR, USING THE PRETEXT OF THE UNDEFINED SECTION OF THE BORDER AND FOLLOWING THE EXAMPLE SET BY BOLIVIA, HAS RECAST ITS HISTORICALLY VAGUE CLAIM TO THE AMAZON, MAKING IT MUCH MORE SPECIFICALLY DIRECTED TOWARD ECUADOREAN ACCESS TO THE MARANON.

3. THE GOP MAY HAVE BEEN CAUGHT SOMEWHAT OFF GUARD BY THIS NEW TACK. THIS WOULD EXPLAIN WHAT APPEARED TO BE A NEW, MORE CONCILIATORY PERUVIAN ATTITUDE AND THE WILLINGNESS TO ENGAGE IN THE "INFORMAL" TALKS WITH THE GOE. U.S. INTEREST IN THE SUBJECT, CONVEYED BY MRS. CARTER, ALSO UNDOUBTEDLY SOFTENED UP THE GOP. HAVING BEEN BURNED, HOWEVER, PERU HAS NOW REVERTED TO ITS TRADITIONAL LEGALISTIC POSITION, INSISTING ON STRICT COMPLIANCE WITH THE RIO PROTOCOL AS A SINE QUA NON FOR FURTHER ECONOMIC COOPERATION.

4. THE FOREIGN MINISTER TOLD THE AMBASSADOR THAT HE HAS SCHEDULED A PRIVATE LUNCH WITH HIS ECUADOREAN COLLEAGUE AYALA IN NEW YORK DURING THE SSOD.
SHLAUDEMAN

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